875 Mitchell Avenue Oroville, CA 95965 530-534-6500 TDD: 530-534-7984 Fax: 530-532-1210

File Code:

1950

Date:

June 13, 2019

Jerry Bird Acting Forest Supervisor Plumas National Forest 159 Lawrence Street Quincy, CA 95971

Dear Supervisor Bird:

The Feather River Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest (the District) supports developing better trail connectivity and additional riding opportunities for off-highway vehicles (OHV) in the Granite Basin area. The Granite Basin area is a popular destination for OHV use on the Plumas National Forest.

On the ground, we find there is a need for improving transportation infrastructure in the Granite Basin to reduce road-related soil erosion and associated sedimentation rates that have potential to impact localized water quality and riparian and aquatic habitats and to restore soil productivity affecting infiltration, storage, and release of storm runoff. There is a need to reduce future maintenance costs of the road and trail network while still providing for legitimate uses of National Forest System (NFS) land including improved access, off highway vehicle (OHV) recreation, mining, and access for vegetation management.

Though high severity wildfire can pose a great short term impact, roads and OHV trails pose the greatest persistent, long term risk to water quality and degradation of aquatic and riparian conditions on NFS lands (MacDonald and Coe 2008). Roads and trails intercept and change natural drainage patterns, soils are compacted, and natural rates of erosion are exceeded, especially on poorly drained roads.

Road and trail densities are high throughout the Granite Basin, and this project proposes to add another 14 miles of trail routes. Within the same area there are approximately 16 miles of existing maintenance level 2 (ML2) road segments that are being neither maintained or used and that currently produce more resource damages than would well planned and maintained motorized trail segments.

The District would like to propose that the following NFS roads are potential candidates for closing and restoration and be included in this Environmental Assessment. Approximately fourteen miles of these roads are currently self-closed and another 2.3 miles are already administratively closed or in storage. (Table 1, Figure 1.)

Spatial data and further analysis would be available from District and Forest staff.





Existing roads and trails that are used in this area for OHV restoration will also need to be prioritized for improvements and maintenance activities that incorporate Best Management Practices.

Sincerely,

DAVID B. BRILLENZ

District Ranger

2 Enclosures